

# UK industry news



## Apprentices gain a voice in Parliament

Sam Dutton (pictured third from right) — an apprentice at KMF (Precision Sheet Metal), Newcastle under Lyme — has been selected to be one of the first members of the Industry Apprentice Council (IAC). Along with other members, he will represent the voice of apprentices across the UK.

Formed by EAL (Excellence, Achievement & Learning), the Council comprises a cross-industry group of up to 12 apprentices who will meet four times a year at the House of Commons; these meetings will coincide with the schedule of the All Party Parliamentary Apprenticeship Group of MPs, whose chairman, Gordon Birtwhistle MP, will act as host.

The key role of the IAC is to ensure that the views of industry apprentices are listened to and understood by the policy makers in London. At the inaugural meeting, the apprentice council discussed responses to recent apprenticeship policy proposals (such as the Richards Review) and began to formulate ideas on how best to

survey the views and ideas of all industry apprentices.

KMF was invited to put forward an apprentice for this role due to its commitment to — and success in — training apprentices. The company's third- and fourth-year apprentices were invited to apply for the role, with Sam being the successful candidate. Mr Dutton said: "At our first meeting, we were in front of a group of MPs and senior business leaders who outlined what they needed from apprentices and apprenticeships. We then had the opportunity to put our views across. It was quite an experience, but I was surprised by their interest in what we had to say."

The issues raised by the IAC apprentices included greater interaction between schools and industry to highlight the benefits of vocational training over further education using the college route, funding for smaller businesses (1,000 employees or less) for apprentice training, and further support for in-house apprentice training.